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*kregen*). The novel referred to was first published in 1862. Is it likely that in this pretext to break off the game an indication of the Dutch or German origin of the slang use of the expression is given?

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*Slick-free* OR *stick-free*?

To the Editors of *Mod. Lang. Notes*.

SIRS:—In Shirley's *The Young Admiral* (Gifford's ed., pp. 128–160), the phrase "*Slick and shotfree*" occurs five times, and the phrases "*free from slick and shot*" and "*slick free*" once each. Gifford, evidently puzzled by the expression, invents this explanation: "Whether *slick* was a cant phrase for a sword (or *steel*), from its smooth and polished appearance, I know not; wherever the word is used, as here, in combination with *shot*, it evidently bears a meaning of this kind." He also states, somewhat vaguely, that "the expression . . . is found in other writers of Shirley's time." Nares' *Glossary* (ed. Halliwell and Wright) gives the word *slick-free*, defining it as "impervious to a sword or other slick weapon," and adds that the word occurs in Holbyband. An examination of the quarto edition of *The Young Admiral* (1637) shows that at least three times the word is printed *stick* instead of *slick*. Gifford, thinking this a misprint, silently changed the reading. But is it not more than probable that *stick-free* is the form that Shirley wrote? It has the merit of being intelligible, while *slick-free*, in spite of Gifford's effort to explain it, is meaningless. Compare, for example, the German *stichfrei*,—invulnerable. Moreover, Burton (*Anatomy of Melancholy*), in the chapter "Of Witches and Magicians" (part I, sect. II, mem. i, subsection iii, or vol. I, p. 233 of Shilleto's edition), has this passage: "They (*i. e.* witches) can make stick frees, such as shall endure a rapier's point, musket shot, and never be wounded." The passage is especially pertinent, because Burton has in mind the same kind of witchcraft and charms that Shirley is ridiculing in the scenes referred to.

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## BRIEF MENTION

*Shakespearian Punctuation*. By Percy Simpson (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1911). This book should have the effect of diverting a share of attention from attempts at emendations of the text to a better appreciation of the meaning of its original punctuation. More important than many a verbal change is the correct punctuation of, for example, the opening lines of the 84th sonnet:

"Who is it that says most which can say more  
Than this rich praise that you alone are you"

Here a mark of interrogation has erroneously become fixed after "which" (here a relative pronoun) and at the end of the second line (p. 13). Mr. Simpson has made a valuable contribution to the study of Shakespeare by considering the system of punctuation of the First Folio and of the first edition of the sonnets as a coherent whole. The old system is thus acquitted of the charge of being the haphazard result of the printers' ignorance. But more than this, the system, "on the whole sound and reasonable," is found to be worthy of 'poetic study,' because it reveals not only the sense of many a passage that has been distorted by modern points, but also the rhythm and cadence of the text, and features of the master's style. To illustrate the last statement, it is a valid induction that shows a feature of Shakespeare's style and rhythm to lurk in an avoidance of monotony "by putting an adjective with the second pair" of a double antithesis. Thus, *Macbeth* I, ii, 57 is correctly printed in the First Folio:

"Point against point, rebellious arm 'gainst arm"

The old system of punctuation, from Spenser to Milton, is, of course, to a very considerable extent rhythmic, and therefore free, in contrast to the modern logical and grammatical system with its rigid rules and stubborn fashions. Mr. Simpson has arranged his material under the 'points' of punctuation. A cross-classification, under the logical categories, would perhaps have served his purpose better. The book is incomplete in range of matter and inconclusive in method of examination; but it must show the importance of studying the rhythmic and rhetorical principles underlying this neglected system of punctuation. The classical scholar has been trained in the observation of a long tradition of rhythmic prose (for a bibliography of the subject see *Am. Journal of Phil.*, xxv, 454, note), and he therefore comes to the reading of an author like Robert Greene (see Professor K. F. Smith, *id.*, xxxii, 346) with the conviction that the 'old fashioned' punctuation served with consistency a rhetoric

and artistic purpose. In respect of this feature, therefore, there is need of sound doctrine in the appreciative reading of such a text as, for example, M. Feuillerat's recent *Arcadia*. Mr. Simpson has made a good beginning in the subject.

*Sieben spanische dramatische Eklogen*, mit einer Einleitung über die Anfänge des spanischen Dramas, Anmerkungen und Glossar, herausgegeben von Dr. Eugen Kohler. Dresden, 1911 (*Gesellschaft für romanische Literatur*, Band 27). 4to., xi + 365 pp. The introduction is the most valuable part of this book. It discusses critically and at considerable length Spain's three pioneer dramatists, or authors of dialogues "en estilo pastoril" (Gómez Manrique, Juan del Encina, Lucas Fernández), and their school, and devotes some seventy pages to a detailed study of the liturgical and secular origins of the drama in Spain. Dr. Kohler has no new material from Spanish archives to offer us, but contents himself with reconsidering the material offered by previous investigators. His familiarity with the bibliography of the subject is noteworthy, and his work will be found useful, if only as a starting-point for future investigations. On many knotty problems of dates, origins and influences, his conclusions are new, and often convincing; that they should always be definitive was not to be expected. When, for instance, in discussing the date of Gómez Manrique's *Representación del Nacimiento de Nuestro Señor*, Kohler observes (p. 4) that from 1458 to 1476 the author was engaged in the wars of the time, and that, therefore, the work referred to must have been written after 1476, he forgets that Gómez Manrique boasted that he could compose "en un día quince ó veinte trobas sin perder sueño, ni dejar de hacer ninguna cosa de las que tenía en cargo," and, at the same time he fails to notice that Gómez Manrique's only dramatic work that can be dated—*Un breve tratado . . . para unos momos*—was acted, or recited, in 1467. Kohler disputes (p. 20) the traditional date of Encina's first eclogue, usually assigned to Christmas, 1492, but overlooks the fact that Encina entered the service of the Duke of Alba in October of that year, and that this eclogue expresses the author's gratitude for his appointment. As the prologue states, Juan, who represents the poet, is "muy alegre y ufano, porque sus señorías le habían ya recibido por suyo." Surely such a statement would only be made in 1492.

The uninspired eclogues reprinted by Kohler are by Hernando de Yanguas, el Bachiller de la Pradilla, Diego de Ávila, Diego Durán, Fernando Díaz and Juan de París; one is anony-

mous (No. iv: "Égloga pastoril nuevamente compuesta, en la qual se introduzen cinco pastores; y el uno es encantador y el vicario del lugar . . ."). Only one has been reprinted in modern times—Diego de Ávila's, published in Gallardo's *El Criticón*, No. 7. About Diego Durán, Kohler can give us no information. Is it possible that he is the poet mentioned in Cervantes' *Canto de Caliope*? If so, his eclogue must have been written about the middle of the sixteenth century, or later.

M. A. B.

The first part of Professor Gerber's treatise on the works of Machiavelli,<sup>1</sup> accompanied by a separate volume of excellent facsimiles and photographs, demands the most respectful attention. The first chapter contends that autograph mss. can be dated approximately by means of characteristics of the handwriting, and applies this method to 37 mss. In the following six chapters, the mss. of the most important works are examined paleographically and historically. The autograph ms. of the *Descrizione del modo tenuto dal duca ecc.*, the only complete ms. of the *Discorsi*, and one ms. of the *Principe* are here employed for the first time. The following conclusions of Professor Gerber illustrate the originality of his work:—The so-called *Frammenti Storici*, the *Nature d'Uomini Fiorentini* and three other documents formerly thought to have been written for use in the *Istorie Fiorentine*, are materials for a prose *Decennale* which was never written. Certain extracts from letters (1497–1499), hitherto ascribed to Machiavelli, are by Marcello Virgilio Adriani. Machiavelli's *Bel-fagor* is the source of the homonymous work by Doni, and, probably, of the work by Brevio. A number of autograph notes to the *Arte della Guerra*, hitherto supposed to belong to the autograph ms., are notes to a lost ms., and the autograph ms. was not used for the Giunti ed. of 1521, while the corrections to the ms. (contrary to the opinion of Lisio) are due to the author himself. The discussion of the rough draught of the preface to the *Discorsi*, and of the relation between the various mss. of the *Principe*, also lead to entirely new conclusions.

J. E. S.

<sup>1</sup> GERBER, ADOLPH, Niccolò Machiavelli: Die Handschriften, Ausgaben und Übersetzungen seiner Werke im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert, mit 147 Faksimiles und zahlreichen Auszügen. Eine kritisch-bibliographische Untersuchung. Erster Teil: Die Handschriften. *Gotha*: Druck von F. A. Perthes, Aktiengesellschaft, 1912.